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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/05/2019
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SUBJECT: GOA AGREES TO ACCEPT MORE GUANTANAMO DETAINEES

Classified By: Ambassador John L. Withers, reasons 1.4 (b), (c) and (d)

¶1. (S/NF) SUMMARY: During meetings with Special Envoy Daniel Fried on December 2, Prime Minister Sali Berisha agreed to accept for resettlement at least three and up to six Guantanamo detainees, provided "they are not ethnic-Uighurs and are not too dangerous." In separate meetings with the Prime Minister and Interior Minister, S/E Fried explained the timeline and process for release of detainees, as well as what would be expected of Albania should more detainees be resettled here. Both Interior Minister Basha and PM Berisha gave their assurances that the GOA will do all it can to successfully integrate the detainees into Albanian society, while also keeping a close watch over them. S/E Fried also raised with MoI Basha several outstanding issues regarding the former Uighur detainees currently residing in Albania. MoI Basha assured S/E Fried that work permits and residency documents will be issued and renewed as soon as possible. S/E Fried made clear to both the PM and Interior Minister that he understood the limited resources the GOA could apply to these resettlements and would not attempt to urge more detainees on the GOA than it could reasonably accept. END SUMMARY.

Meeting With PM Berisha

¶2. (C) S/E Fried thanked the Prime Minister for his willingness to meet with him and to consider resettling more Guantanamo detainees. S/E Fried said that he had identified a number of detainees that fit the criteria outlined by PM Berisha during a September meeting on the margins of UNGA: "no ethnic-Uighurs and no very dangerous people." Minister Basha, who previously met with S/E Fried, handed the PM the files for nine detainees which S/E Fried had provided. S/E Fried highlighted three from that list who seem the best fit the PM's stated criteria. S/E Fried told the PM that resettling detainees "will be a lot of work" and said the U.S. would count on GOA support for an effective resettlement. He told the PM "you must be comfortable with the process. Don't take on more than you can handle."

¶3. (C) PM Berisha said "regarding the three detainees you highlighted, we can take them tomorrow." He said he would be willing to accept up to six detainees total, provided they fit the GOA's "not-too-dangerous, not-ethnic-Uighur" criteria. Berisha said he will accept anyone deemed suitable for release to Albania by the USG, adding that he doesn't anticipate any political fallout in Albania coming from any further resettlements. Berisha assured S/E Fried that the GOA will be able to cover all resettlement and

security costs itself, and said that financial assistance from the U.S. or other countries would not be necessary.

Interior Minister Basha

14. (C) In his earlier meeting, S/E Fried provided Minister Basha with the files for nine detainees and urged Minister Basha to look them over in detail before the GOA makes any decisions. S/E Fried explained in detail the release procedures for detainees, and walked Basha through U.S. expectations of the GOA in the event Albania agrees to resettle more detainees. S/E Fried told Basha that once resettled, the detainees would need to be watched and noted that the USG would stay in close consultation with the GOA on security measures.

15. (C) Basha admitted that Albania has limited resources, but assured S/E Fried that the GOA was doing its best to provide for the former detainees currently living in Albania and would provide for any future resettles. He highlighted that the GOA is housing the previously transferred detainees under watch and providing for their welfare. Basha noted that the GOA is coming into this decision with a long-term outlook for a comprehensive resettlement of any detainees it resettles. While agreeing with PM Berisha's decision not take any U.S. funding so as not to detract from the GOA's gesture, Basha said he would ask the PM to reconsider accepting money that had been offered by Luxembourg to help defray resettlement

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costs (NOTE: PM Berisha concluded that the GOA would accept no financial assistance whatsoever).

16. (S/NF) COMMENT: As always, the Albanians are willing to go the extra mile to assist with one of our key foreign policy priorities. The detainees that they will consider are likely to meet their "not-too-dangerous" concerns and contain no ethnic-Uighurs, and they will certainly take on board a number of these. As S/E Fried noted, however, they should do so in the context of a realistic appraisal of their resettlement resources and their monitoring capacities. In this light, the PM's willingness to accept six is a gracious, but probably extravagant offer. If he ultimately sees his way to providing for three, he will have made a helpful, but realistic contribution. S/GC assesses that the GOA will resettle three detainees based on these constraints.

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